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The Art of Serving

MAYAN REVELATION NO. 270

Serving — an Art

Claim the Joy of Service

Serving With Humility

Find Fellowship in Service

Serving With Daring

Meet God Face to Face

Affirmation

Beloved Perfector:

We who call ourselves Mayans are bound together by a common desire to discover the pathway to a richer, fuller life, and to follow that way by daily, hourly effort. In this Lesson we will consider some of the stumbling blocks to our progress, and will look for ways to remove them.

We are living in an age when the sound barrier has been broken, and man has flown into space. While scientific advancement has been breathtaking, our progress in human relations has been pitifully slow. The number of people who are frustrated and unhappy is increasing, rather than decreasing. One reason is that so many men and women are self-centered.

Modern psychologists emphasize the truth that if a person is to find true happiness, he must grow in mind as well as in body. When one is mature he no longer thinks of himself as the center of the universe.

Unfortunately, many people never attain true maturity. You no doubt know someone who puts the "I" in the center of all his thinking, and as a result, meets frustration at every turn. Don't let that someone be you. You want to learn to be sensitive to the needs of those you meet, to feel their longings and heartaches. New joy and satisfaction awaits you as you master the Art of Serving. This Lesson will help you to reach the higher levels of happiness. You will find more of the joy, and peace, and satisfaction which you have hoped might be yours. You will learn that service unlocks many doors to a fuller life.

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Now, as we begin our studies of The Art of Serving, let us repeat the following Prayer:

PRAYER

Open my mind, Father, to thy Divine Truth.
Help me to learn the Art of Serving. Teach
me how to achieve greatness through humility,
and how to find personal happiness through
bringing happiness to others. Amen.



SERVING - AN ART

*W*E can learn a great deal about the ART OF SERVING from Mahatma Gandhi, one of the great men of this century. Speaking of the motivation of his life, Gandhi said: "What I want to achieve ... is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain salvation."

The struggle for self-realization and a personal experience of God did not tempt this sensitive spirit to utilize all his time in prayer and fasting. Indeed not! Like Jesus of Nazareth, Gandhi allowed the hours spent in prayer to act as a springboard from which he plunged deeper into the needs of others. He minimized his personal privation and discomfort, but was gripped by the desire to mitigate the suffering of those about him. This gigantic task seemed hopeless, and might well have prompted a man to only pray for the millennium, and not attempt immediate reforms.

Gandhi's name will always be associated with non-violence - the principle that, even when attacked, his followers must not return blows. The Soul-force he advocated has never been fully tested on a mass scale, but Gandhi himself applied it - loving and helping even those who imprisoned him.

In Mahatma Gandhi's life we see an example of the ART OF SERVING. Gandhi found his self-realization as he gave himself to others. He met God face to face as he came to respect those who had thought they were untouchable, and as he extended a helping hand to those who were struggling for a better life.

A recent traveler in India was disturbed by the many evidences of hunger. He could not escape those who thronged about him, begging for help. His means were limited, and he had neither the genius nor the influence to in any way improve the whole social structure. He wrote to a friend, describing the tragic conditions he had seen. Then he posed this question: "What can I do?"

The reply was simple and direct: "Help the next person you meet."

HELP THE NEXT PERSON YOU MEET. If that person is hungry, give him something to eat. If he is lonely, give him companionship. If he is sad, give him comfort. If he is stumbling in the dark, share the Light you have gained from your study of Mayanry.

Serving becomes an art when the assistance you render is offered gladly, spontaneously, and with no thought of what you will receive in return. Serve in this spirit and your reward will be great; but don't look for it, or calculate its value.

SERVING WITH HUMILITY

A YOUNG missionary was home on furlough. The day before he was to return to the foreign field, he called to say goodbye to a neighbor, and learned that the man was late with his haying, and fearful that a storm was coming. Pushing aside the pressing need to finish packing for the long term overseas, the young man went into the field to help with the haying. His mother said this was the way she wanted to remember her son - humbly serving wherever he saw a need.

Several years ago a bishop, after preaching to a great crowd, was a guest at our table for Sunday dinner. When we had eaten, and had prayed together, the bishop arose, came to the kitchen, and said, "Where can I find an apron? I'm going to wash the dishes."

As the bishop assisted, with true humility, he reminded us of the night when the Master "rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded (John 13:4,5).

For the disciples the towel became a symbol of humble service. Perhaps the apron can be called such a symbol in our day. Yet there is danger in adopting any symbol. Humility is a fragile thing. Even as we stoop to serve we must avoid feelings of secret pride in what we are doing.

Jesus condemned the pharisee who said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." The Master condemned all self-righteousness.

Remember the teaching of Christ: "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 18:14).

Become the humble servant; but let true love and concern dictate all you do. Inner peace and quiet satisfaction will come as by-products whenever you strive to humbly serve.

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SERVING WITH DARING

P RIDE can be a stumbling block that prevents one from mastering the Art of Serving. Pride can be pushed aside only by asking God's forgiveness, and daily recalling the truth, "He who humbles himself will be exalted." Laziness can be a stumbling block, often hidden by signs saying, "Tomorrow will be soon enough", or "That's none of my business." For some honest seekers of the Way, the greatest stumbling block of all is timidity.

As you have studied this Lesson perhaps you have been saying to yourself, "Serving is fine for someone with talent, or ability, or power; but I'm just dragging along. I can hardly take care of myself. You can't expect me to do much for others when all my strength is required to keep me from becoming a burden to my family and friends."

Your Instructor knows there are many of our students who are ill or handicapped. This Lesson is not only for the strong; it is for everyone who is

seeking a richer, fuller life. Don't compare yourself with someone else. Take for your touchstone the person God intends you to be. Attempt the difficult. Dare to live sacrificially, and Divine Strength will flow into your life. You will be given power to do what would otherwise have been impossible.

Look at the life of Mary Slessor, one of the most daring spirits of the past century. You will see in her life what happens when a person with many human limitations becomes a channel to carry God's love where it is needed. Mary, born in Scotland in 1848, was allowed only a few years' schooling before she was forced to labor in a factory. She worked at a loom from six in the morning until six at night. While busy with the shuttles she thought not of her own weariness, nor the poverty of her home, but of what she could do for children who lived in the slums. In the evening she often gathered the street urchins about her, reading them stories and telling them of the Christ who could bring light and joy into even the most cramped life.

When Mary Slessor was twenty-eight, David Livingstone died. Christian leaders in Scotland appealed for young men and women of vision to go to Africa to carry on his noble work. Mary Slessor volunteered. She could have found excuses to avoid the call to serve. She had little education. She had no training for so difficult a task. She was needed at home.

With only the power of God to sustain her, Mary Slessor lived among savages, ate their food, shared their troubles. For many years she was the only white person at the remote mission station. The girl who, when she was in Edinburgh, had been fearful to cross a street alone, fearlessly went into the African bush to rescue children from the hands of a witch doctor who had condemned them to death.

Suffering physical pain as well as fatigue, she often arose early in the morning and labored far into the evening, rescuing unwanted children, teaching, and settling disputes. Late at night she sat by a campfire listening to complaints, and smoothing out domestic tangles. On several occasions she prevented tribal wars. The British government had not yet ventured to dispatch a white official to the savages whom she served, so Mary Slessor was appointed as their consular agent.

The natives recognized her great love for people, and called her "Ma". Others referred to her as "The White Queen."

How did this uneducated Scotch girl overcome her timidity and with unmatched daring go alone to serve among people whose appearance and customs were far different from her own?

First, she saw every human being as important.

Then, she truly loved them.

Finally, she became so involved in the problems of others that she forgot her own limitations, trusting in God to supply the wisdom and the strength for each demand that was made upon her.

By comparison, your opportunities for service will seem meager, and may lack any touch of glamour. They may not bring recognition, and perhaps not even

a word of thanks. Don't let this deter you. Look for someone who needs help - perhaps someone under your own roof, or in your neighborhood, or your city. Possibly someone farther away.

Don't hesitate to serve whenever you see a need. It may take courage to speak the word indicating your willingness to help. It may call for effort beyond what you previously have thought was reasonable. It may call for sacrifice - sacrifice of time and of money. But serve with daring: a friendly word today, an unexpected kindness tomorrow, and generosity beyond what you can afford.

As you give of yourself to help others, you will break the barriers that have been hemming you in. You will find new freedom of spirit, and even unsuspected resources.

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CLAIM THE JOY OF SERVICE

*T*HE way to find joy is to bring it to others. In exact proportion as you give joy to others, you will receive joy in return.

All of us want not only passing thrills, but deep, satisfying happiness. Amusement is not enough. Sensuous pleasures soon fade away. What we long for is the kind of experiences that bring shining eyes and a radiant smile - the kind of experiences that cause a man to whistle a tune, and a woman to sing as she goes about her work.

This isn't something that comes as we consciously strive for it. It isn't enough just to say to yourself, "I want to be happy, and if I just think I'm happy I will be happy." This radiant joy won't come even by saying, "If the only way to find happiness is to help others, I'm going to do that so I can be happy."

I think of a woman who looks old and pinched, far beyond her years. Her face has a drawn, worried look. Although she lives in a beautiful house, and has a kind husband and two lovely daughters, she never seems to enjoy her home. She is always too busy to listen to what her family and friends have to say. She frantically tries to squeeze into her schedule more and more responsibilities, as if activity could make her forget some gnawing worry. She wakes up tired, dashes about all day, and never finds true joy in anything she does. The woman takes a certain pride in the number of things she accomplishes, but she never knows joy, peace, and satisfaction.

Yet joy can be the reward of service when the motive for serving is true love and concern for others. After the Master had washed the disciples' feet, and had told them that he had done it as an example, and that they were to wash one another's feet, he added: "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

The word BLESSED refers to this deep, satisfying joy of which we have been speaking.

CLAIM THIS JOY FOR YOURSELF!

1. Be genuinely concerned for others.
2. Obey the impulse to show your concern by the look in your eyes, the touch of your hand, and the words you speak.
3. Render humble service every day - with no thought of reward - either spiritually or materially.

Follow these three rules and you will find satisfaction in helping others; you will claim the joy that is promised to all who serve in the spirit of Christ.

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FIND FELLOWSHIP IN SERVICE

*W*E all face the temptation to become wrapped up in ourselves. Unless we resist it our selfishness may cut our lines of communication with others. When we focus our thoughts upon our personal ambitions, our pain, and our desires, we are like horses wearing blinders, unable to see anything to the right or to the left. We may even be oblivious to the longings of the person nearest and dearest to us.

God did not intend for men and women to lead solitary lives. He put into our hearts a craving for companionship - companionship with each other, and companionship with Him. Loneliness vanishes when we give ourselves to help someone who is in need.

I called recently at the home of a childless couple who had asked for counsel. When I drove up to the house I noticed that several boys were playing baseball in the yard. After greeting the couple, I inquired who the boys were.

"Oh, just boys who live in the neighborhood", the woman said. "They like to play there. Our big yard makes a good ball field and we like to have them around." As the couple talked, it became evident that they were not childless. They had found love and companionship by serving young people. YOU CAN FIND HAPPINESS, TOO, AS YOU WELCOME OTHERS INTO YOUR MIND AND HEART.

Of course, we never hesitate to reach out a helping hand to our own children or grandchildren, but when we reach beyond the bonds of blood and give loving service to those who have no immediate claim upon us, we not only find unexpected joy, we become part of a larger fellowship.

Service clubs, which have had remarkable growth in the past fifty years, are held together not by similarity of age or occupation, but by a common desire to serve. Wherever their avowed purpose is achieved, the fun of singing and joking is superficial compared with the pleasure that comes when men and women work together for a worthy cause.

Perhaps you have noticed a spirit of joyous satisfaction when men have dug deep into their pockets to help a crippled child, or to send underprivileged boys and girls to camp. Perhaps you have seen it at a church or fraternal gathering where people were giving generously of their time or their money. Surely your own life has been enriched every time you have an opportunity for

fellowship in service.

FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION UPON THE NEEDS OF OTHERS.
THEN YOUR OWN PROBLEMS WILL SHRINK IN SIZE.

JOIN THE FELLOWSHIP OF THOSE WHO SERVE.

New satisfactions will enrich your life, and frustration and loneliness will disappear as you find ever-increasing joy in the fellowship of those who serve.

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MEET GOD FACE TO FACE

GANDHI said: "I want to see God face to face."

That is the longing in your heart and mine. Sometimes our problems are too difficult to solve alone. Sometimes our suffering and heartache is so acute we desperately need Divine Help if we are to rise above it. Sometimes death knocks at our door and we need the assurance that his coming does not bring an end to all that we treasure.

As you join in hymns of praise you may know that God is listening. As you kneel in earnest prayer you may clearly hear God speaking. As you give loving service you may meet God face to face.

Don't expect this to happen on every occasion. Our thoughts are so entangled in selfishness and materialism that it is difficult to tune in on the Divine Wave Length. But we must keep trying - by praise, by prayer, and by service.

The experience of Brother Lawrence can be yours. If you are familiar with the life of this great soul you know that, although he lived two centuries ago, the peace he felt and the Presence that sustained him, are what you and I desperately need today.

Brother Lawrence was no stained-glass saint. He was intensely human. One who knew him well said: "His communion with God was interwoven with his daily labor." Brother Lawrence quickly won the confidence of those who met him. He made strangers feel that they had found a friend.

When this monk was assigned his first turn at kitchen duty he detested it. Later he was able to write: "For me the time of action does not differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are together calling for as many different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as when upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."

In humble service, gladly rendered, Brother Lawrence met God face to face. This can be your experience and mine.

Try to see the wistful longing in the eyes of a child. Share the loneliness of a friend who has lost his life's companion. Feel the heart-hunger of someone you meet at home, or school, or place of business. Then give of

yourself, and your service, as you feel prompted to give.

Share another's load, and your own burden will become lighter.

Become absorbed in the task of helping someone else, and you will find true joy and fellowship.

Pour out your life in service, and you will meet God face to face.

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AFFIRMATION

Today I will think less of myself and more of others.

I will not hesitate when I see an opportunity to serve.

I will claim for myself the joy and peace that come with serving.

Blessings,

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Mayan Revelation Number 270

Special Instructions

As an aid toward absorbing the important truths we have brought in Lessons 267 through 270, we are listing below certain questions that will help you to review these lessons. As you answer them, examine yourself more closely and see just how much a part of your own living they are, and see where you may grow into more happiness by emphasizing their importance in your life. It is in this way that you can come into the abundance of blessings that await you from their practice. Write the answers, so that they may be indelibly impressed in your mind - and that you may have a permanent record to which you may refer whenever you need a reminder.

DO NOT DETACH THIS PAGE!

Keep it for future reference as a ready key to the most important factors in the Art of Living.

1. Name the three fundamental principles that apply to the Art of Receiving:

(Reference: Lesson 267)

2. When we practice the Art of Receiving, what are the three sources from which we can receive the greatest gifts of life?:

(Reference: Lesson 268)

3. When we practice the Art of Giving, we have learned that it is not necessary to give lavishly or extravagantly of material possessions. With our gifts, whatever they may be, we should give of our:

(Reference: Lesson 269)

4. Name three rules one can follow to find the highest satisfaction in helping others:

(Reference: Lesson 270)

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